



# DOING BUSINESS

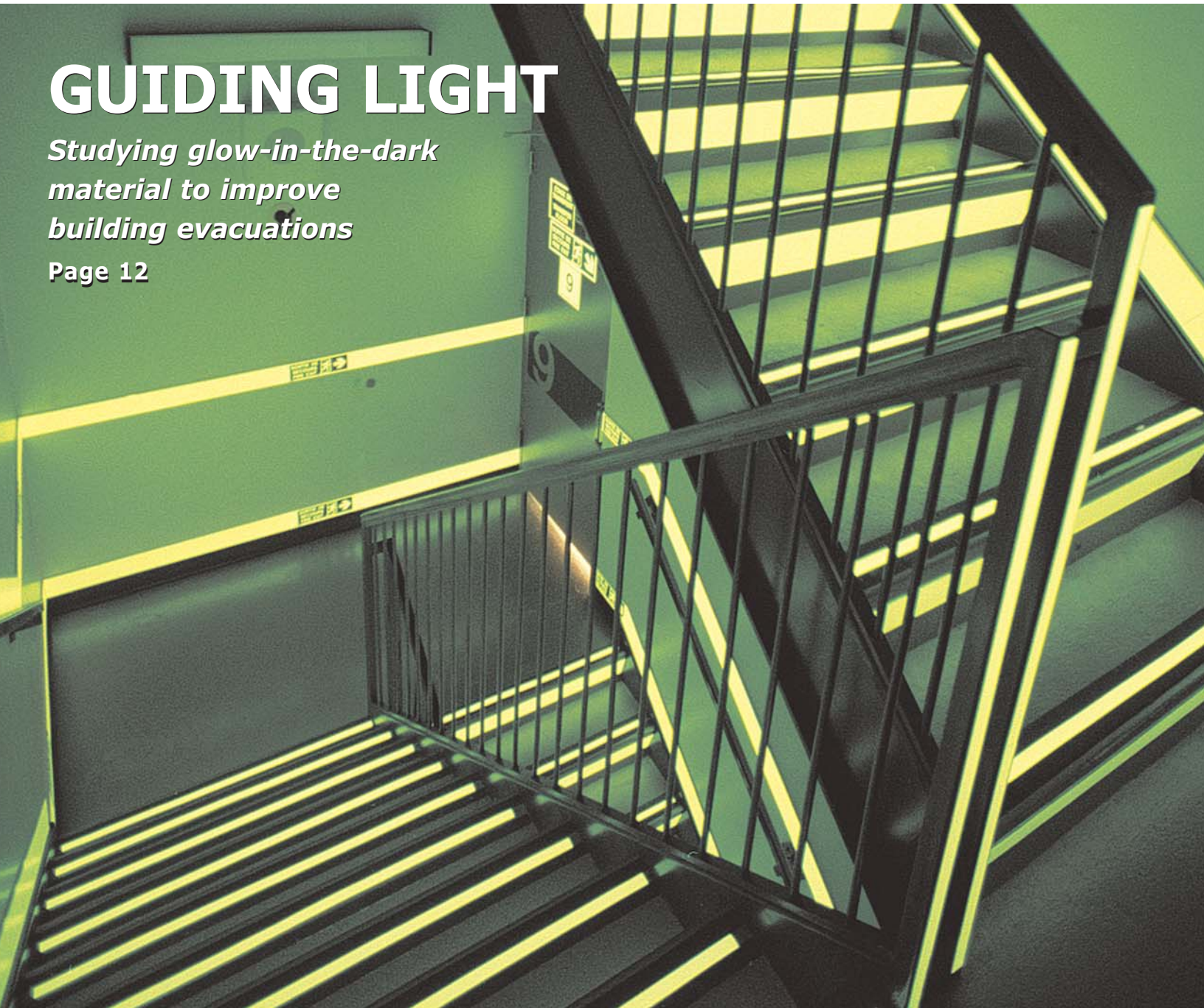
with Public Works and Government Services Canada

Spring 2007

## GUIDING LIGHT

*Studying glow-in-the-dark material to improve building evacuations*

Page 12



Public Works and  
Government Services  
Canada

Travaux publics et  
Services gouvernementaux  
Canada

Canada





# DOING BUSINESS

## CRADLED IN NATURE

PAGE 8

PWGSC



PWGSC



Library and Archives Canada

### Frozen conditions

Four PWGSC employees traveled to northern Nunavut to conduct site inspections and prepare building condition reports for two remote sites: Resolute Bay and Eureka.

### A massive cleanup

The Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia have announced that cleanup for the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens will begin this spring.

### A new portal for pension and benefits information

PWGSC and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat have jointly launched a Web site on behalf of Public Service Pension Plan members looking for information on pension and benefits. .... 3

### Bring your shopping savvy to work

When we open our own wallets to buy something, looking for the best value is second nature. In Canada's public service, that same attitude is captured by procurement transformation. .... 5

### How we buy: New tips and tools

PWGSC is helping several departments assess their purchasing practices to change how they buy, and help them take greater advantage of the government's efficiencies of scale. .... 5

### Behind-the-scenes at the Canada Winter Games

PWGSC lent its expertise to help out at the 2007 Winter Games that were held February 23–March 10 in Whitehorse, Yukon. .. 11

## On the Cover

### Guiding light

PWGSC and the NRC pooled their resources to test the effectiveness of a new fire safety system at the C.D. Howe Building in downtown Ottawa.



National Research Council of Canada

As Public Works and Government Services Canada's (PWGSC's) external newsletter, **Doing Business** supports the Department's role as a common service provider by informing colleague departments, Canadians and all other interested parties about interesting and innovative PWGSC services, activities, projects and initiatives. Written, designed and published quarterly by PWGSC's Communications Sector, it is also available on-line at [www.pwgsc.gc.ca/db](http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/db).

If you would like to regularly receive a copy of **Doing Business**, please complete the postage-paid response card or make a subscription request via the Internet at [www.pwgsc.gc.ca/db/text/subscribe-e.html](http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/db/text/subscribe-e.html).

**Doing Business** welcomes feedback and suggestions for future stories. Please address your comments to: Joe Boulé; Editor, Doing Business; Communications Sector, PWGSC; 16A1, Portage III; 11 Laurier Street; Gatineau, QC; K1A 0S5. Fax: (819) 956-0573. E-mail [questions@pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:questions@pwgsc.gc.ca)

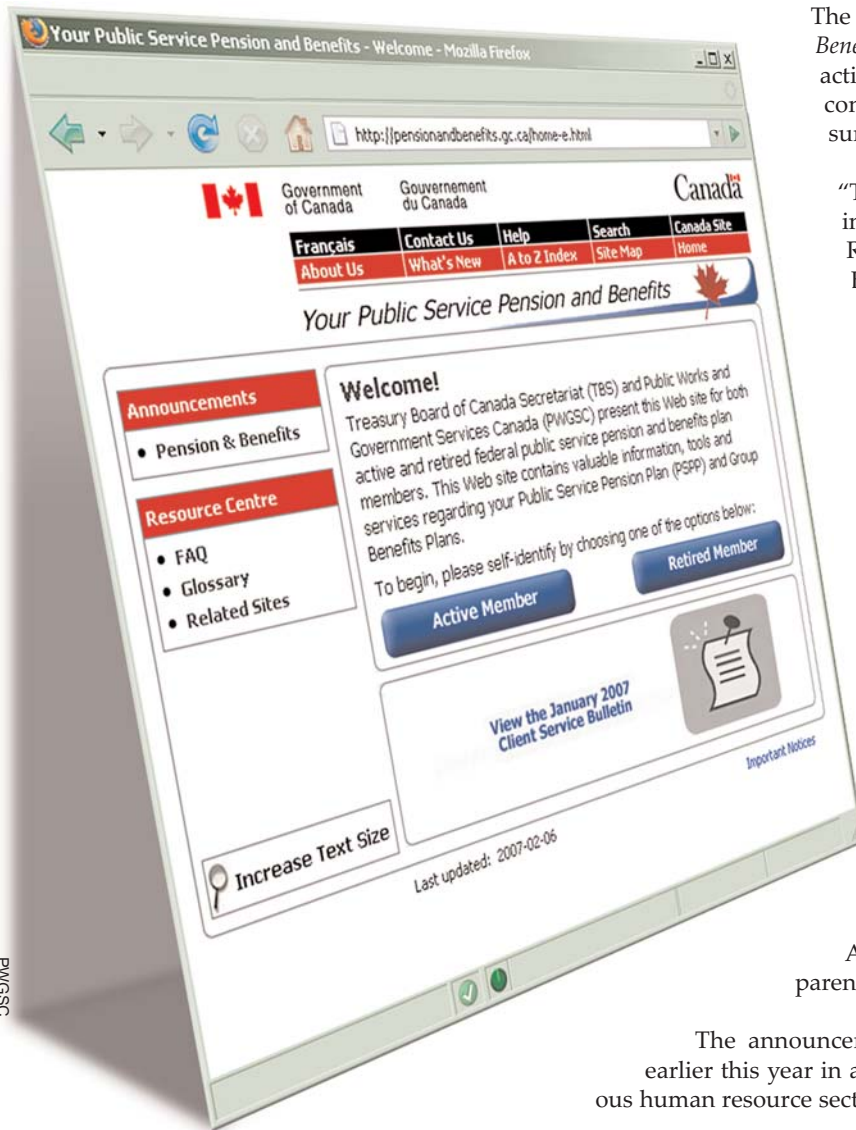
© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services (2007) ISSN 1201-7450



# A new portal for pension and benefits information

*Active and retired Public Service Pension Plan members can now bookmark a single site to get the information they need*

**P**WGSC and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat have jointly launched a Web site on behalf of Public Service Pension Plan members looking for information on pension and benefits.



The on-line portal, entitled *Your Public Service Pension and Benefits*, has up-to-date information and tools for the 280,000 active and 220,000 retired pension plan members. It also contains plenty of information for dependants and survivors.

“This is a one-stop-shop for anyone wanting the latest information about their pension and benefits plans,” says Renée Jolicoeur, Assistant Deputy Minister, Accounting, Banking and Compensation Services, PWGSC. “Whether you are new to the federal public service, in mid-career or enjoying retirement, the portal will direct you to information regarding your Public Service Pension Plan and group benefit plans.”

In addition, the portal enables plan members to access their personal pay and pension information using the Compensation Web Applications (CWA). One popular CWA tool is the pension benefits calculator, which allows active members to obtain an estimate of their future pension entitlements.

Having a single starting point is an innovative and welcome change for users who had to search up to three Web sites previously. Now, users are guided to authoritative sites easily when they choose the information they need from this gateway.

The site also provides information to common questions and life event scenarios that can affect Public Service Pension Plan members — both active and retired — throughout their life and career.

A myriad of topics are covered, such as becoming a parent, re-employment after retirement and disability.

The announcement introducing the site was mailed to pensioners earlier this year in a Client Service Bulletin and a letter was issued to various human resource sectors in the Government of Canada soon thereafter. **DB**

For more information about the Public Service Pension and Benefits Web Portal, visit: [www.pensionandbenefits.gc.ca](http://www.pensionandbenefits.gc.ca)



# PWGS **Can** Help

Is your Department or Agency receiving inquiries...

## From small companies

asking how they can do business with the federal government?

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises assists small companies as they navigate the government procurement system and works to ensure the system treats these businesses fairly.

[www.pwgsc.gc.ca/acquisitions/text/sme](http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/acquisitions/text/sme)  
1-800 811-1148

## About how government buys goods and services?

Business Access Canada is an on-line portal where there is basic information on how government purchasing is done, who the contacts are and how businesses can find opportunities.

[www.contractscanada.gc.ca](http://www.contractscanada.gc.ca)

## About where government contracts are posted?

MERX is an easy and efficient prospecting tool for government tenders allowing businesses to browse and bid on a wide array of contracts.

[www.merx.com](http://www.merx.com)



# How we buy: New tips and tools

*What we've learned... so far*

Over the last few months, PWGSC and several of its client departments have identified many specific opportunities for improved processes and savings. Using client engagement workshops, personalized support and a suite of new tools, PWGSC is helping several departments assess their purchasing practices to change how they buy, and help them take greater advantage of the government's efficiencies of scale as well as develop best practices.

One of the new tools to help client departments look at their own buying is based on several practices in purchasing systems found in the Government of Canada. Using such a tool as a self-assessment guide can help departments identify and target their unique procurement opportunities, strategies and improvements

resulting in better processes and savings.

The "best practices" approach in turn helps departments to see what leading organisations are doing and how to apply the tools that we are sharing through client engagement workshops. Based on our experiences, departments are usually able to quickly identify where they already have mature purchasing practices and also where they have some opportunities.

The first wave of eight departments and agencies are fully involved in the Government of Canada's procurement transformation initiative. In the coming months, and with the help of PWGSC Acquisitions Branch support, a second wave of approximately twenty departments will be engaged. **DB**



Jupiter Images

# Bring your shopping savvy to work

## **Procurement transformation**

When we open our own wallets to buy something, looking for the best value is second nature. In Canada's public service, that same attitude is captured by procurement transformation.

## **We do the legwork; you reap the savings**

At PWGSC, we do all the legwork and comparison shopping for you. We scour the market, negotiate with suppliers and find the best value. We

also roll up orders across government to save through economies of scale.

## **Standing offers: a great way to buy goods and services**

Suppliers who have proven they offer best value via a competitive process obtain standing offers. Buying goods and services from suppliers who have standing offers isn't just mandatory, it's a great way to save time and money.

## **Just the facts**

PWGSC is making it easier to use new Standing Offers by offering fact sheets on the goods and services that government buys most. To date, we have completed fact sheets on office supplies, envelopes, hotels and lodging, car rentals, bulk fuel, and Unix and Linux systems. **DB**

Use the facts so you can get the best value from standing offers by calling 1 866-664-6609.

# Frozen conditions

*Trekking to Canada's far North to assess federal properties*

**E**lectrical specialist Mark Beaulieu braced as the Arctic wind whipped wildly against his face. Trudging through the snow, he reached the side of the building, stooped down and examined some electrical wire. They were frayed in parts. An animal – it could have been a caribou, rabbit, wolf or perhaps even a polar bear – had chewed the wire, mistaking it for food.

It's not something Mr. Beaulieu sees routinely in his electrical inspections. But, most of his inspections are not in Canada's far North.

Mr. Beaulieu was one of four PWGSC employees that traveled to northern Nunavut to conduct site inspections and prepare building condition reports (BCRs) for two remote sites: Resolute Bay and Eureka.

Through its Real Property business line, PWGSC provides federal departments and agencies with a full range of real property services. BCRs assess structural safety and other aspects of the client's facility.

Environment Canada contacted PWGSC to prepare building condition reports for 21 sites across the country,

The remote location means there is no electrical grid. Diesel powered generators run continuously to supply electricity for the site.

including the Eureka weather station on Ellesmere Island.

The Eureka research base consists of four main areas: the Eureka airport, the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory, the Department of

National Defence's microwave and satellite communications hub for the North, and Environment Canada's weather station. Eureka is the second-northernmost permanent research community in the world.

After three days of travel, the four specialists from Maintenance Management Services (soon dubbed the "Frozen Four") landed in Eureka to get down to the business of site inspection.

A site inspection is the first step in the preparation of BCRs. Specialists assess the state of the buildings from six perspectives: architectural/structural, vertical transportation, mechanical, electrical, property/site and building and occupant fire safety (see sidebar for details).

As part of the assessment, specialists identify the buildings and systems and evaluate their current conditions. The assessments are based on Treasury Board guidelines and a number of codes and standards such as the National Building Code, the Canada Labour Code and the National Fire Code.

The reports summarize maintenance and repair needs and determine if replacements are required. This summary also includes detailed cost estimates for the



**Ellesmere Island**



**Eureka**

Map of Canada: Jupiter Images

PWGSC



PWGSC's "Frozen Four" (left to right): Adrian Grenon, Mark Beaulieu, George van Mierlo, and Colin Erwin.

work required. The work is then prioritized as mandatory (to be done on an urgent basis or within a year), cyclical

(within one-to-five years) or optional (typically done within five years or more).

A research base like Eureka has its own specific challenges due to the extreme cold climate. For example, the remote location means there is no electrical grid. Diesel powered generators run continuously to supply electricity for the site. With average winter temperatures of  $-37^{\circ}\text{C}$  and summer

highs of just  $6^{\circ}\text{C}$ , many building systems will run all year long. Because of the extreme conditions, operating schedules and site remoteness, typical life expectancies of both facilities and operational equipment are reduced. "Equipment that would typically last 35 years may only last 15 under these conditions of constant use," explains Mr. Beaulieu.

The team spent five days examining more than 20 structures at Eureka before returning home with all their observations to prepare the BCRs.

The reports are valuable for future budget planning. "With a final report in hand, client departments can implement accurate capital, repair and maintenance budget forecasts and plan for future required expenditures," says Darrell Dirks, the PWGSC Ontario Regional Manager in charge of the Eureka project.

Environment Canada's Capital and Repairs program will use the BCRs to help plan for the future.

"Maintenance planning is especially important at a remote site like Eureka. Getting materials and tradespeople up to a remote site to do maintenance work is expensive. And it is even more expensive if it is needed on an urgent or emergency basis. The BCRs help clients plan and schedule maintenance, and avoid the costs of emergency calls." DB

### Building Condition Report Categories

Below is a list of the categories included in BCRs and examples of some of the things that inspectors examine.

**Architectural/Structural:** foundations, walls, roof, doors, floors, ceilings, stairs.

**Vertical transportation:** elevators, escalators.

**Mechanical:** heating, cooling, plumbing, sewers, etc.

**Electrical:** electrical power, emergency power, telephone and communications, lighting.

**Property/site:** pavements, landscaping, waste water treatment.

**Building and occupant fire safety:** fire safety plans, fire exits, sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, fire alarms.

### Diesel fuel is used to generate all power at Eureka.





# Cradled in nature

*Parks Canada Visitor Centre 'plunked down in place from above,' built for sustainability*

**W**hen the construction crew arrived to build the Parks Canada Visitor Centre in Tobermory, Ontario, they found a large rock outcrop situated near the planned main entrance where the building was to be.

At a traditional construction site, the rock would be blasted away.

However, at this site, the rock is left undisturbed and the landscape designer adjusted the blueprint to make room for the stone.

"We strived to have a minimal impact on the environment," says Robert Campbell, PWGSC project manager. "We wanted to keep as many trees and natural topographical features as possible."

As one of the largest landlords in the country, PWGSC has a mandate to reduce the environmental impact of the structures it manages and builds.

PWGSC handled all phases of the construction of the new Visitor Centre for the Bruce Peninsula National Park and the Fathom Five National Marine Park, which opened August 2006.

After consulting Parks Canada officials to get a feel for what they wanted at the 4.25-acre site, PWGSC in-house designers drafted a landscape site plan. The client wanted a functional and sustainable building — along with a 90-car parking lot — that would have minimal disturbance on the natural surroundings.

The Department then put contracts in

place with architects and construction companies and managed the work at the site.

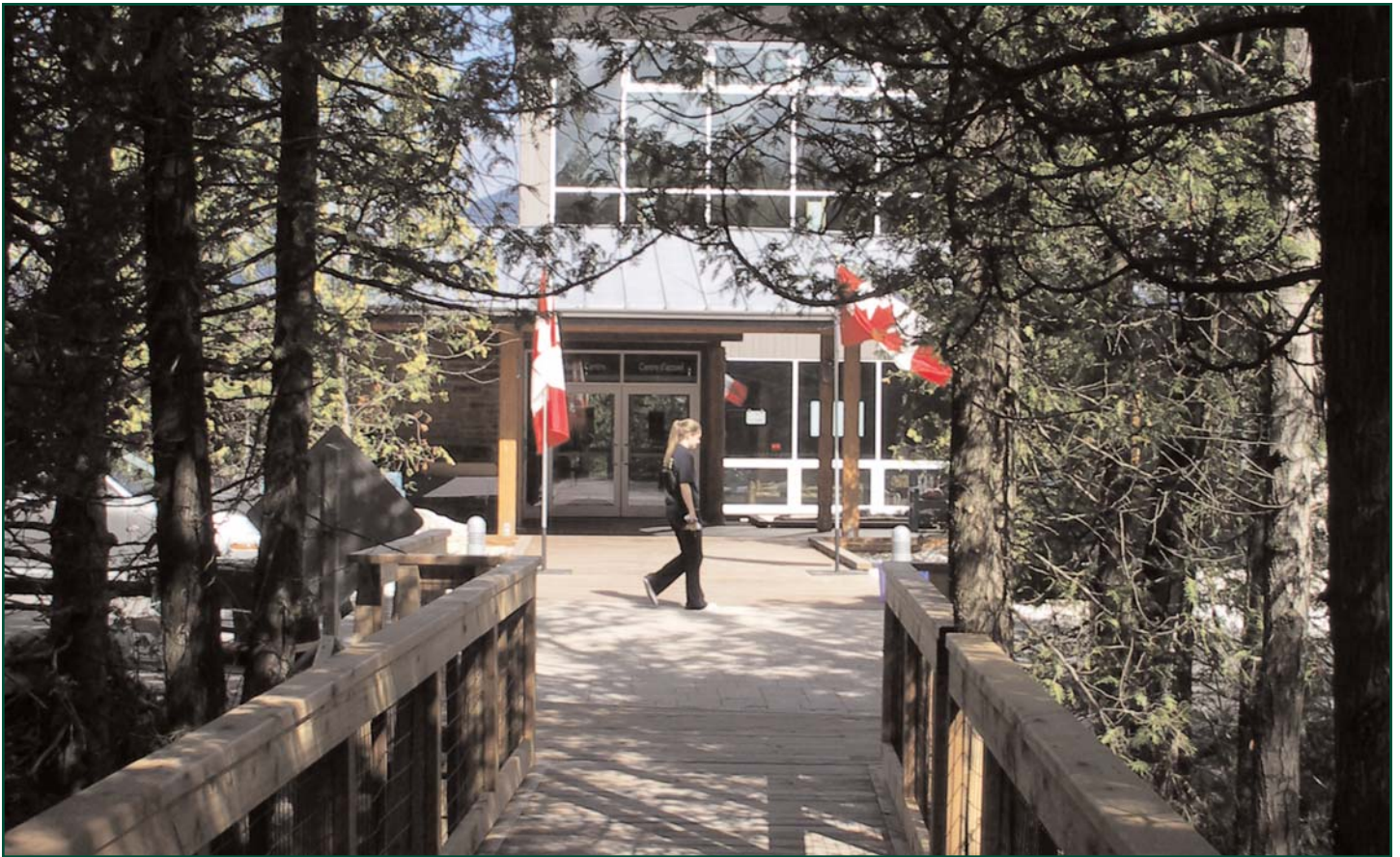
The fully accessible and environmentally friendly Visitor Centre includes a large exhibit hall, a theater, public reception areas and office space for park staff. The exhibit hall features museum-quality displays that allow visitors to explore the ecological and cultural significance of both parks. Outside, trails are part of the visitor experience and a 20-metre viewing tower was built to offer panoramic views.

The entire project was based on sustainable design principles and used building materials that reflected those environmental priorities: There are solar panels on the roof for energy; the water is heated using solar power; there are low water consumption plumbing fixtures; and low energy lighting. The building is well insulated



The new Parks Canada Visitor Centre in Tobermory, Ontario.





PMGSC

**Boardwalks and gravel pathways lead visitors from the parking lot to the main building and around the site, with a cedar deck at the entrance welcoming visitors to the Centre.**

and the climate control system is computerized to reduce energy usage. Water is drawn from a well and filtered on-site.

“A well was the best way for us to get water to the location,” explains Mr. Campbell. “If we were to draw water from Georgian Bay, it would have involved a large excavation to lay pipes and that would have disturbed more plant life.”

The sewage disposal system has a much smaller “environmental footprint” than a traditional system and uses peat moss instead of a conventional sand tile bed for drainage.

Boardwalks and gravel pathways lead visitors from the parking lot to the main building and around the site, with a cedar deck at the entrance welcoming visitors to the Centre. The 70mm-thick decking is 100-year-old Western Red Cedar, recycled from an

old warehouse roof in Toronto. The materials were also used to build ramps inside the building for greater access.

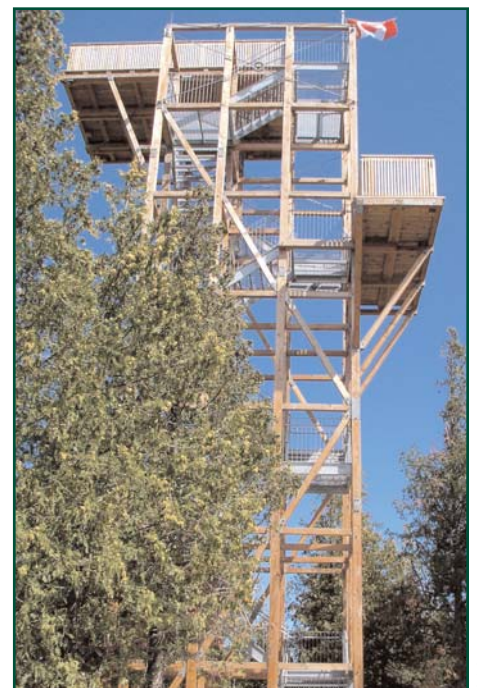
The Visitor Centre also has a unique feature called “night sky lighting.” The lights outside the building, such as those in the parking lot, are all aimed directly at the ground to reduce the amount of light pollution that interferes with stargazing at the remote location.

When planning the site, the designers wanted to minimize the disturbance to the natural topographical features such as native trees and plants. The Centre is nestled unobtrusively in the surrounding forest and is a ten-minute walk from the northern end of the Bruce Trail in the town of Tobermory.

“It looks almost as if the building and roads were constructed and plunked down in place from above. The areas

around the structures are undisturbed,” says Mr. Campbell. DB

**A 20-metre viewing tower was built to offer panoramic views.**



PMGSC



# A massive cleanup

*Full remediation work to begin this construction season at Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens*

**F**or nearly 100 years, steel and coke production on the eastern shore of Sydney Harbour on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island was an industrial mainstay. At one point, almost half of Canada's steel was coming from this region. However, when the steel making completely stopped in 2000, the decades of intensive industrial activity had left more than a million tonnes of contaminated soil and sediment in the Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens sites adjacent to the former steel mill. It also left the challenge of figuring out the best course of action to clean it all up.

On January 28, 2007, the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia announced that the cleanup for the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens will begin this spring. The process will involve solidifying and stabilizing the contaminated soils, followed by containment and capping of the sites. Site development and long-term maintenance and monitoring will then follow. The tech-

nologies involved are proven and have been employed successfully at numerous sites across North America.

After years of public engagement, about 620 technical studies, 100,000 volunteer hours and over 1,000 public meetings, PWGSC became the federal lead for the

cost-share and lead the project. This was followed by a comprehensive Environmental Assessment which culminated in an independent review by a Joint Environmental Assessment Review Panel. In July of 2006, the Panel published a report containing over 50 recommendations. After a thorough review by both governments, the recommendations were supported and a decision was made on the remediation methods.



**The Sydney Tar Ponds.**

PWGSC

project. In 2004, the Government of Canada and the province of Nova Scotia signed a Memorandum of Agreement to

PWGSC Minister Michael M Fortier was in Sydney for the official announcement, noting that it was an example of effective and timely federal-provincial co-operation. "My colleagues and I have worked closely with our provincial counterparts to reach this decision. We will continue to work with them to ensure that the project activities are undertaken in an environmentally sound way that protects the health of our communities." To ensure this, PWGSC will monitor the project while working with federal and provincial partners and the Cape Breton District Health Authority.

"PWGSC's role is also to ensure that the project is managed in an effective and accountable manner that Canadians deserve and expect," explains Ken Swain, Project Director, from his Sydney office. "Our small project team has been very busy in helping to move this initiative to its starting line and we look forward to the next seven years of successful implementation with the community's support."

"This is such an exciting milestone. After many years of collaboration between the governments and the communities in determining the proper way to remediate the Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens, work toward the actual cleanup is finally at hand," says John McBain, Regional Director General of PWGSC's Atlantic



Library and Archives Canada

**After many years of steel production in Sydney NS, the contaminated soil and sediment in the Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens sites adjacent to the former steel mill are undergoing a major cleanup.**



Region. "Once the project is complete, the possibilities of sustainable uses of the land are limitless. We are currently studying the end use question to determine the best of the possibilities."

The cleanup is expected to employ approximately 150 people during each construction season. The Sydney Tar Ponds Agency has developed an economic benefits strategy designed to ensure local companies and First Nations businesses have full opportunity to participate in the project. In addition to the many short-term economic and social benefits, the cleanup will provide a lasting legacy to the community.

In 2004, the federal government allocated \$3.5 billion toward the assessment, management and remediation of federal contaminated sites. An additional \$500 million was identified for sites such as the Sydney Tar Ponds, where the responsibility was shared between the federal government and another entity.

PWGSC has several roles under the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan: It acts as custodian to hundreds of known contaminated sites; offers expert project support through the Office of Greening Government Operations for other departments in managing and remediation of other sites; plays a liaison role with industry; and also manages support to custodial departments on a fee-for-service basis.

There are currently 188 projects underway that involve the assessment, management or remediation of over 600 sites. **DB**

## PWGSC Can Help

Need help in Greening your operations?

The Office of Greening Government Operations can help you understand green procurement, meet your environmental regulatory requirements (CEPA, CEAA, SARA, Fisheries Act etc.) and provide services and advice in a broad range of environmental areas such as pollution prevention and waste management.

[www.pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/](http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/)

# Behind-the-scenes at the Canada Winter Games

Since 1967, the Canada Games have given more than 50,000 Canadian amateur athletes the chance to leave their mark in Canadian sports history. For the 2007 Winter Games that were held Feb. 23-Mar. 10 in Whitehorse, Yukon, PWGSC lent its expertise to help out.

For three years, PWGSC has been working on the provision of venues, equipment, translation and procurement services for the event. "We provided corporate management assistance in the area of administrative development and ongoing management and implementation during the Games" says Tom Sparrow, Director, Yukon Operations. The Department also helped set-up various meetings for the Games' planning sessions and worked with a number of organizations, including the Canada Games Council, Canadian Heritage, Sport Canada, the Yukon Government, and several First Nations communities.

With environmental issues in the forefront of everyone's mind, the 2007 Games were promoted as the Green Games. "PWGSC played a key role in many behind-the-scenes aspects of the Games and lent our sustainable development expertise and guidance," says Mr. Sparrow. "It was a great opportunity for us to share our knowledge and also prepare us for the 2010 Olympics, taking place in Vancouver, British Columbia." **DB**

Co-ordinating an event of this magnitude required the commitment of many organizations, both in the public and private sector. "We were able to assist the Games because of our ability to co-ordinate and communicate issues through our vast networks," explains Mr. Sparrow. "Many issues arose that were not directly related to the Department, but we were able to connect the right people within the federal family – both regionally and nationally."

## Promoting Government of Canada programs

PWGSC also partnered with Canadian Heritage in a project aimed at profiling the contributions that the Government of Canada made towards the Games. It was an opportunity to showcase the programs and services offered by different federal departments. PWGSC worked to provide the infrastructure – including floor space, security and multi-media equipment – needed for the activities and displays at the Elijah Smith Building in Whitehorse. "The Canada Games were an excellent opportunity to celebrate the cultures of Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal communities and to recognize the federal government's contributions to the North," says Mr. Sparrow. **DB**



Athletes gather at the main stage during the opening ceremonies of the Canada Winter games.

# Guiding light

*Studying glow-in-the-dark material to improve building evacuations*

**I**n October 2006, PWGSC and the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) pooled their resources to test the effectiveness of a new fire safety system at a 2-tower 11-storey federal office building in downtown Ottawa.

Twelve minutes later, thousands of workers were safely out of the C.D. Howe Building.

The point of the drill was to study the usage of photoluminescent material (PLM) in the signs, floors, stairs and handrails in various stairwells of the building. PLM glows in the dark and can help occupants safely evacuate a building without light or filled with dense smoke. Until now, different types photoluminescent wayguidance systems had never been tested with large groups of people during an evacuation. During the surprise fire drill, employees were videotaped going down the stairwells to help the research team measure their movement, time and ability to find destinations.

As one of the largest building owners in Canada, PWGSC has a vested interest in research into human behaviour during an evacuation. With thousands of employees working in hundreds of buildings across the country, the development of improved safety guidelines for evacuations is a priority for the Department.

PLM stores energy from natural and artificial light and becomes highly visible in darkness.

"From the results of an earlier evacuation study in 1998, we knew that photoluminescent wayguidance systems had potential to improve occupant safety in life-threatening situations," explains Garnet Strong, Director General of Professional and Technical Programs of PWGSC's Real Property Branch. "The objective of this project was to find an optimum PLM configuration in order to develop a standard installation practice, hopefully leading to a national standard. To this end, we engaged the NRC to participate in our project."

NRC fire researchers have built a world-class reputation for their work in human behaviour during fire emergencies. They were invited to participate in the investigations following the World Trade Center bomb attack in 1993,



National Research Council of Canada

**A stairwell demonstrating how effective photoluminescent wayguidance systems can be.**

where thousands of evacuees had to descend in stairwells of total darkness. Following their recommendations, PLM was installed in all the stairwells of the complex and proved invaluable during the 2001 attacks.

Over the next few months, the PWGSC/NRC research team will be analyzing the data collected during the Ottawa office building fire drill and results will be used to establish federal standards for PLM installations that are efficient in guiding occupants out of high-rise buildings. **DB**